MICROBE-CULTURE AT BUKAREST

Discoveries at the German Legation

From
The Rumanian Official Documents

HODDER & STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO
MCMXVII.

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THE DOCUMENTS

Note from the Rumanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to the Governments of Neutral States

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MICROBE-CULTURE AT BUKAREST

Discoveries at the German Legation From the Rumanian Official Documents

RUMANIA renounced her neutrality towards the Central Powers in the third August of the war, and the Germans professed indignation. But when the German diplomatic staff left Bukarest it was discovered that they had not renounced but violated their neutrality towards Rumania during these two years of peace, and this violation had been trebly disgraceful. It was committed clandestinely under the cloak of friendship; the instruments of it were the accredited representatives of Germany in the Rumanian capital; and the hostile acts of which they were guilty were dastardly and devilish. Fifty infernal machines, and six test-tubes containing cultures of the anthrax and glanders bacilli, had been conveyed by German diplomatic couriers (exempted by their international privilege from the scrutiny of the Rumanian Police) from the German Consulate at Brassò (Kronstadt), in Hungary, to the German Consulate at Bukarest. These objects were afterwards unearthed in the garden of the German Legation, in the presence of a member of the U.S. Legation and of the

Rumanian Prefect of Police, when the German diplomatists had departed. The story would be incredible if it were not proven by incontrovertible documentary evidence.

"The attention of the Rumanian Government," states the Minister for Foreign Affairs, "had for some time been attracted by certain activities of the German Consulate at Bukarest, which seemed to it suspicious. On several occasions, packets and cases had been introduced with a multitude of precautions into the Consulate, and had not issued from it again till the day before our declaration of war (Aug. 14/27th, 1916), when a certain number of them were transferred to the German Legation, which at Bukarest occupies a separate position situated at a considerable distance from the Consulate in question. The Rumanian authorities having further convinced themselves that the suspicious cases had not been taken away, on their departure, by the German diplomatic staff, and that consequently they must still remain on the Legation premises, the Government ordered the Prefect of Police of Bukarest to take the necessary steps for the recovery of the cases in question and for the examination of their contents. In pursuance of this, the Prefect conferred with the U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary, to whose charge had been committed the protection of German subjects in Rumania and the guardianship of the premises of the Imperial Legation. His Excellency was good enough to authorise Mr. W. Andrews, his

Secretary of Legation, to accompany the Prefect of Police in his search, as international custom prescribes. . . ."

The search was conducted on Sept. 22nd/Oct. 5th, 1916, at Bukarest.

"Mr. Andrews and I," states the Prefect of Police in his first *procès-verbal* of the same date, "accompanied one another at 11 a.m. to the premises of the German Legation at Bukarest, Calea Victoriei No. 188, where we found present the persons Michael Markus, porter, and Andrew Maftei, servant, who had both been authorised to remain in Bukarest and live as caretakers on the Legation premises, upon a request made by the head of the departing diplomatic staff and transmitted by the U.S. Legation.

"I, the Prefect of Police, then explained to Michael Markus the object of our visit and our desire to conduct a search in the garden of the Legation premises, and the said Michael Markus did not deny that a box and several cases, of which he professed not to know the contents, had been buried in the Legation garden. . . ."

Michael Markus' deposition is contained in a second *procès-verbal*, drawn up on the same date by the Prefect of Police.

"My name," he deposed, "is Michael Markus, German subject, domiciled at Bukarest on the premises of the German Legation, where I have been in service 22 years. . . .

"Either the day before the departure of the German diplomatic staff from Bukarest, or on the day itself, Herr von Rheinbaben, Councillor of the Legation, ordered me to burn the flags and anything else that might have been left lying loose. The cases now in question were in a basement room, whither they had been brought from the German Consulate before the day on which the mobilisation decree for the Rumanian Army was published. When I drew Herr von Rheinbaben's attention to these cases, he told me that they must be buried.

"After the departure of the staff, I asked Herr Krüger, Chancellor of the Legation" (then attached to the U.S. Legation at Bukarest) "what I was to do with the cases. He replied that they must be buried, and Herr Krüger himself, Andrew Maftei, and I proceeded to take them and bury them in a trench we dug. I did not know what the cases contained. I only know that Herr Krüger advised me to handle them cautiously. As regards one of them—a box wrapped in paper, and bearing the seal of the Imperial Consulate—I remember that on the day before the mobilisation, or possibly on the day itself, Herr Adolf (I forget his christian name,* but I know he was Assistant Military Attaché to the Military Attaché, Colonel Hammerstein) gave me this box, and told me to bury it in the garden. I helped for a moment at digging a hole, but as I was very much taken up with my duties, it

* Herr Lucian Adolf is the gentleman referred to.

ended in Herr Adolf burying the box himself. He did not tell me what was in the box, which he kept in his hand. I do not know where the box came from or who had brought it. I set eyes on it for the first time the day Herr Adolf asked me to bury it in the garden. . . ."

Michael Markus' deposition was confirmed by Andrew Maftei.

"At our request," the Prefect of Police continues in his first *procès-verbal*, "Michael Markus fetched a spade and dug in the garden border skirting the wall of the Legation building towards the Rue Kosma, between the eighth and ninth tree, counting from the corner of the building. Here, at a depth of about 50 centimetres, the digging brought to light first 50 'Bickford cords' with charges, and then 50 metal boxes of an elongated rectangular form. . . .

"At another spot in the garden, along the party-wall dividing the garden of the Legation from the next premises in the Rue Kosma, we dug again, after Michael Markus had removed a pile of firewood which covered it; and this time we brought to light a box of rectangular form, wrapped in white paper, and bearing in red wax the seal of the Imperial German Consulate at Kronstadt. It also bore the following directions in writing:—

By King's Messenger! Very Secret! Not to be thrown!!!

Bukarest.

For Herr Kostoff,
To His Honour
The Colonel, Military Attaché to
The Imperial Bulgarian Embassy at Bukarest,
Herr Samargieff.

"Under this first wrapper there was a second, also of white paper, bearing the following directions, written in red pencil :—

Very Secret *By Tela*
To the Royal Colonel and Military Attaché His Honour Herr von . . . . . .

"The name had been rubbed out, but traces of the letters *H a m . . . t . i n* (Hammerstein ?*) can still be recognised on a close examination.

"Inside the box, above a layer of cotton-wool, there was a typewritten note in German, to the following effect :—

Herewith 4 tubes for horses and 4 for horned cattle. For use as directed. Each tube is sufficient for 200 head. If possible, administer direct through the animal's mouth ; if not, in its fodder.

Should be obliged for a little report on success with you. If there should be good news to report, Herr K.'s presence here for a day desirable.

"Beneath the layer of cotton-wool there were six little wooden boxes of elongated form. In each box there was a glass test-tube containing a yellowish-looking liquid. . . ."

"As appears from this *procès-verbal,*" the Prefect of Police adds in his covering report to the

* Colonel von Hammerstein being the German Military Attaché at Bukarest.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, "the discovery of the explosives and of the packet containing the phials of microbe-cultures, buried in the garden of the German Legation, took place in the presence of Mr. W. Andrews and of Messrs. Michael Markus, porter of the Legation premises, and Andrew Maftei, servant in the said Legation. Mr. W. Andrews signed, *ne varietur*, the paper wrapper of the box containing the phials, which bore the seal of the Imperial German Consulate at Kronstadt, as well as the address of the consignees. He also signed the note in German found inside the box, explaining how to use the liquid contained in the phials. For my part, I sealed with the seal of the Prefecture of Police the boxes containing the cartridges of explosives, the packet of fuses, and the boxes containing the phials. I sent specimens of these to the proper laboratories for analysis and experiment. . . ."

The infernal machines were sent to the Royal Military Pyrotechnical Laboratory, which reported on them in the following letter to the Prefecture of Police :—

"Kingdom of Rumania,
"Military Pyrotechnics,
"(Letter) No. 10472.
"Sept. 27th/Oct. 10th, 1916.

"The explosives discovered at the German Legation, forwarded to us for examination by the Prefecture of Police, consist of :—

"(i). Fifty cartridges formed of rectangular

boxes made of zinc sheeting—dimensions 20 × 7 × 5 centimetres. Three of the main surfaces each contain a priming-point, in order to allow of the cartridge being primed in any position.

"These mine-cartridges weigh a kilogramme each, and bear the mark: *Donarit I. Kavalerie Sprengpatronen. Sprengstoff A. G. Carbonit Hamburg Schlebusch.*

"The explosive contained in these boxes belongs to the order of high explosives with nitrate of ammonium and trinitrotoluene (trotyl) and its less nitrous derivatives as their base.

"As a destructive agency, this explosive belongs to the category of dynamite with *Kieselguhr,* one kilogramme developing 700 major calories.

"As regards its destructive effects, it may be sufficient to mention that 200 grammes of the said explosive, that is, a quantity equivalent to one-fifth of the contents of each box, if placed on a railway track, would cause the destruction of it over a length of one metre.

"The fifty kilogrammes might cause the destruction of a bridge-pier or of a large building, serve to mine a road, and so on.

"(ii). Fifty fuses, each 2 metres long, and provided with a detonating cap containing 2 grammes of fulminate of mercury.

"These fuses are of the kind commonly employed to cause an explosion either on wet or dry ground.

"Although the mine-cartridges, as well as the

caps and fuses, look in bad condition on account of their having lain buried in earth, they are nevertheless perfectly fit for use.

(S.) "LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PHILIPESCU,
"Director of Pyrotechnics. (L.S.)
"SUB-LIEUTENANT A. PECURARU,
"Chemist in Chief and Managing
"Head of the Laboratory."

This was the report on the infernal machines. The test-tubes, meanwhile, had been sent to the Rumanian Institute of Pathology and Bacteriology, and the Director, Dr. Babesh, reported to the Prefect of Police upon them in the letter which follows :—

"Institute of Pathology and Bacteriology.
"(Letter) No. 361.
"Bukarest,
"Sept. 28th/Oct. 11th, 1916.

"MR. PREFECT,

"In response to your letter No. 134003, of Sept. 24th/Oct. 7th last, in connexion with which you have been good enough to transmit to me for analysis two stopped phials, each containing a yellowish-looking liquid, I have the honour to inform you that, after making the experiments desired, I obtained the results set forth below.

"The liquid found in the first phial, the stopper of which was wrapped in red paper, secured by a tag of thread twisted round the neck, was seen under the microscope to contain a very considerable quantity of thin, oblong bacilli with slightly

undulated filaments. I applied subcutaneous injections of this liquid to two guinea-pigs, which died after thirty hours. I also made inoculations in gelatine and potatoes. In these mediums the culture developed a large quantity of colonies, which were recognised under the microscope as carbon bacilli. The coating of the organs and the blood of the guinea-pigs in question also contain a large quantity of bacilli, which present all the characteristics of the carbonic bacteride, and the same condition has been observed in the sections of their organs (liver, spleen, intestines), so that I can declare positively that this first phial contains a very virulent culture of the anthrax (carbon) bacillus.

"The liquid contained in the second phial, of which the stopper and neck were wrapped in white paper secured in the same way as in the other case, reveals, under microscopic examination, a number of thin bacilli and short, thin filaments resembling the glanders bacilli. Having made inoculations of these in potato, I observed to-day, being the third day since the inoculation was made, that on one of the fields of culture there had developed a thin bacillus and filaments in colony form, of a transparent, mucous appearance, but in great part dry, thin, and adhering to the surface of the potato. It is possible that this bacillus might be the glanders bacillus. I applied injections of this liquid to horses, and will communicate to you the results of these experiments as soon as they are completed.

(Signed) "Dr. Babesh, Director."

The results were duly reported in a second letter from Dr. Babesh to the Prefect of Police of Bukarest :—

"Institute of Pathology and Bacteriology.
"(Letter) No. 374.
"Bukarest,
"October 5/18th, 1916.

"MR. PREFECT,

"In resumption of my letter No. 361, of Sept. 28th last, I have the honour to inform you that, having now completed my investigations with regard to the phials of microbe-cultures received in connexion with your letter No. 134003 of Sept. 24th, I have ascertained the following facts :

"(i). The phial wrapped in red paper contained a culture of the carbon (anthrax) bacillus, which has been identified by inoculations and as a result of injections practised upon guinea-pigs.

"(ii). The phial wrapped in white paper contained a culture of the glanders bacillus, which has been identified by inoculations and as a result of injections applied to animals.

(Signed) "DR. BABESH, Director."

The implications of these discoveries are examined by the Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs in his Note to Neutral and Allied Governments, to which the copies of the documentary evidence are annexed.

"It has thus been proved," he writes, "in a manner that is unfortunately beyond dispute,

that before our declaration of war against Austria-Hungary, that is to say, at a period when the Rumanian Government was observing a strict neutrality and maintaining normal relations with the German Empire, the staff of the Imperial Legation violated all the rules of neutrality and all the duties of diplomatic representatives by introducing secretly into the Rumanian capital considerable quantities of an extremely powerful explosive, and bacillus-cultures which were intended for the infection of domestic animals, and were in consequence likely to produce terrible murrains, as well as maladies transmissible to human beings.

"There is no possible doubt as to the manner in which the substances in question must have been introduced into Rumanian territory. The extremely rigorous measures of frontier police which were taken by the Rumanian Government from the beginning of the European War and were continually strengthened at later dates, are ample proof in themselves that these explosives and bacillus-cultures were dispatched through diplomatic channels—as is corroborated by the seal of the German Consulate at Brassò, placed upon the box of microbe-cultures—and that they can only have reached the Imperial Legation through the agency of diplomatic couriers, protected by the special immunities attached to their office. The names of the successive consignees of the package of phials also make it possible to ascertain the time-limits within which the said

cultures were imported into Rumanian territory. The Bulgarian Military Attaché, Samargieff, took up his duties on Sept. 28th/Oct. 11th, 1913; Mr. Constantine Kostoff, the delegate of the Bulgarian railway administration to the Rumanian railway directorate, acted in this capacity in Rumania from Jan. 7/20th, 1915, to Aug. 12/25th, 1916, when, two days before our declaration of war, he was presented to the Rumanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs as attaché to the Bulgarian Legation. Finally, Colonel von Hammerstein joined the Imperial German Legation as Military Attaché on May 2/15th, 1916. All three left Rumanian territory on Aug. 21st/Sept. 3rd, 1916, and on Aug. 23rd/Sept. 5th following, in consequence of the rupture of our relations with Austria-Hungary's allies.

"Neither can there be any doubt as to the object with which the said substances were imported into Rumania, or as to the use for which they were intended, for it can easily be understood that these explosives and bacillus-cultures could not have been introduced secretly from Rumania into Russia, there being no German diplomatic couriers to introduce them, and that they were not intended, either, for transmission to Germany's Balkan allies, since in that case there was no difficulty in dispatching them direct to the German Legations at Sofia or Constantinople. It is thus evident that the explosives and bacilli were to be employed in Rumania, most probably in time of peace, since the Legation was

requested to 'make a little report' on the 'success' obtained, and to communicate the results through the agency of 'Mr. K.' It is proved, in fine, that in time of peace members of the German Legation, protected by their immunities, were preparing, in complicity with the members of the Bulgarian Legation, to perpetrate, on the territory of a friendly neutral state, criminal attempts against the security of this state and against the lives of its subjects.

"The Rumanian Government feels it its duty to protest solemnly against these criminal proceedings, and especially against the employment of microbe-cultures—a dishonourable weapon, certainly worse than the employment of poison, which is forbidden in terms to belligerents by the Fourth Hague Convention. It must also protest against this unheard-of violation of the imperious duties of loyalty and correct conduct which are imposed by international law upon diplomatic representatives in return for the prerogatives and privileges which it guarantees them."

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